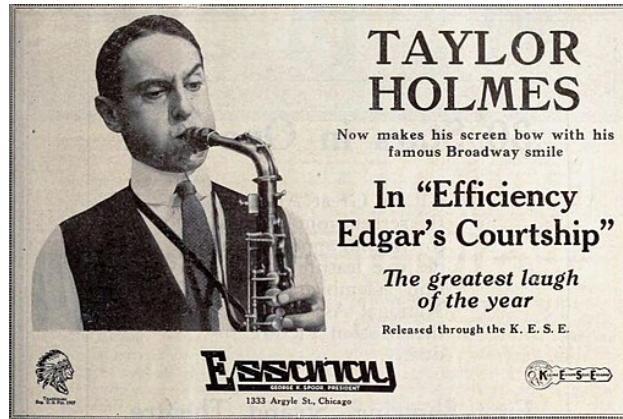


# ONE DOG, TOO DOGE, RED TAPE, GREEN TAPE

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The 1917 film that led *Moving Picture World* to ask: "Efficiency wins success in business; why not in love?"  
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With the end of January consigning Christmas decorations to cheerful memory, even if northern blizzards and hot-button issues stoked by the incoming Trump administration are less conducive to jollity, is it "time to cut the green tape"? Lauren Smith [thinks](#) that such eco-bureaucracy is "Why Britain can't build anything" (*spiked*, January 29).

Solar power is not in fact as much of a real-world threat to England as it was in the hands of Christopher Lee's fanciful Bond villain Francisco Scaramanga. Across the Atlantic, red-staters are the ones eager to snip red tape, even if the bounteously bearded fellow in a red hat gracing the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page was not Kris Kringle but Karl of *Das Kapital*, [illustrating](#) Jacob Berger's case for why conservatives have more in common than they assume with the original Red ("Why MAGA Folks Should Read Marx," January 23).

The prospect of a so-called "Department of Government Efficiency" may provoke Green New Dealers, but the original New Deal's Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman had been promptly inducted into the "Society of Red Tape Cutters" created by Dr. Seuss for the staunchly leftist newspaper *PM* to laud "Boldness and Directness of purpose" in overcoming "petty bureaucratic detail."

Even after Seuss became more associated with the amusements of what *Dissent*'s Michael Kazin [called](#) "lovely nonsense with no discernible moral point" than pointed propagandizing, the lines were not so clearly drawn. In 1982, conservative columnist George Will gushed that "the space program is the greatest conceivable adventure; yet the government scants it." Will leaves unnamed any particular "Philistine utilitarians" he has in mind who need to be swayed by "such marvels as nonstick frying pans" but must have had in mind the likes of Democratic Senator William Proxmire, who had infamously [insisted](#) that NASA's Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence "should be postponed for a few million light-years" (or at least "until right after the federal budget is balanced").

In 1999, Garry Wills couldn't understand why Americans would "want inefficient politicians to govern us" when "we do not want inefficient doctors to treat us, inefficient lawyers to represent us," a year after Barry Goldwater's *New York Times* obituary [reminded](#) readers that his "philosophy was never more simply put" than when he had declared that "I have little interest in streamlining government or making it more efficient... for I propose to extend freedom."

The "new, smaller government" [promised](#) in Bill Clinton's 1996 State of the Union address was compromised by micromanagement as well as malpractice — as when proposing deeper involvement "in the workplace, in religious, charitable, and civic associations" or "to cut bureaucratic red tape so that schools and teachers have more flexibility for grassroots reform, and to hold them accountable for results" in ways that were inevitably top-down — and laid the ground for the seemingly endless conflicts and post-dot-com-boom busts of the twenty-first century. Disentangling voluntary cooperation from such astroturfing is necessary to break free from red (and green) tape.

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## PUBLICATION/CITATION HISTORY